

# The Evolution and Characteristics of Chinese Overseas Education in the UK (1949-1965)

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**Objectives:** On the eve of the founding of the People's Republic of China, a large number of students studying in Britain returned home under the influence of the Chinese policies and their patriotic feelings, which laid the foundation for studying abroad education in New China. In the first few years after the founding of New China, the Chinese government adopted a "one-sided" approach in diplomacy, that is, it favored the eastern bloc headed by the Soviet Union and did not send students to Britain. After the Korean War, China and Britain established diplomatic relations at the level of charge d'affairs in 1954, providing an opening for Chinese overseas education in Britain. From 1956 to 1965, China sent a certain number of international students to Britain, which was determined by Sino-British relationship. The majors of these English students were mainly natural science, and a few students' majors were English language. The living expenses of students studying in the UK were provided by the Chinese Embassy in the UK, which exercised the authority to manage students studying in the UK.

**Key words:** Chinese overseas education in Britain; Sino-British relations; evolution; characteristics  
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## THE RETURN OF STUDENTS STUDYING IN THE UK IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE FOUNDING OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

In 1948, the progress of the civil war had undergone a fundamental change. In response to the process of the war, Liu Ningyi who was a Chinese official went to the UK to conduct political propaganda among the students studying in the UK, and mobilize them to return to China to participate in the preparations for the establishment of New China. Liu Ningyi carried out political propaganda among them, which created a certain influence. "Chen Tiansheng, an old seaman, released a mimeographed Chinese

publication "Democratic Front" with the assistance of students studying in the UK. Later, Xinhua News Agency also published its English telecommunications in London. Cao Richang, a student studying in the UK, was active among his classmates as a member of the China Democratic League. All these have produced an impact on students studying in the UK."<sup>1</sup>

Under the influence of this, coupled with patriotism, some students studying in the UK successively returned to China in the autumn of 1948 to participate in the preparations for the establishment of New China.<sup>2</sup> Wang Daheng, who worked in the research department of Changsi Glass Company in the UK, also returned to China this year. After his return, the

famous scientist Wu Youxun was commissioned by a Chinese official to invite him to the liberated area. Wang Daheng immediately agreed. After arriving at Dalian University (now Dalian University of Technology), he served as the dean of the Department of Physics. Cheng Zhenqiu, who graduated from University of Oxford, also returned this year. After returning to China, he went to Peiping and then worked at the Foreign Affairs School (today's Beijing Foreign Studies University).

At the same time, people from all walks of life across the country were actively mustering support for the founding of New China. The People's Republic of China was established on October 1, 1949. The new country entered a period of economic recovery and social construction, which required a large number of talents. Therefore, national leaders believed that attracting overseas students back to China was a convenient and effective way. As early as August 1949, the North China Higher Education Commission received for the first time returned overseas students, including students studying in the UK. The North China Higher Education Commission also entrusted the Preparatory Group for the First National Congress of Natural Science Workers to organize a committee for returned overseas students,<sup>3</sup> but due to various reasons, the matter was shelved. In December 1949, the Government Administration Council (the national government agency after the founding of the People's Republic of China was called the "Government Administration Council", and this name was used until the opening of the first National People's Congress in 1954) decided to establish a "Committee for Handling Matters Concerning the Return of Overseas Students" under its Culture and Education Committee to uniformly handle matters concerning the return of overseas students and scholars. On December 13, the Committee for Handling Matters Concerning the Return of Overseas Students was established and held its first meeting. The meeting passed the "Guideline of the Committee for Handling Matters Concerning the Return of Overseas Students". The main contents of the "Guideline"

on the matters concerning return of overseas students include: 1. Investigation into overseas students still abroad, mobilizing them to return to China as soon as possible; 2. Publicity, understanding and education of overseas students before and after their return; 3. Entertainment for overseas students after their return; 4. Coordinated arrangement of the work for returned overseas students.<sup>4</sup> The meeting elected Ma Xulun as the director of the Committee for Handling Matters Concerning the Return of Overseas Students, Zhang Zonglin and Shao Quanlin as the deputy directors, and Huang Xinmin as the secretary. The meeting also decided to set up an office for daily matters of returned overseas students in the Higher Education Department of the Ministry of Education.

The news of the founding of New China spread to the UK, which created a strong response among students studying in the UK. 176 students studying in the UK jointly wrote a letter and sent it to Xie Bangding, then chairman of the All-China Students' Federation. In the letter, the students studying in the UK congratulated the founding of New China and decided to return to participate in the construction of the motherland. "The people of the motherland have established many glorious and remarkable undertakings under the wise leadership of Chairman Mao."<sup>5</sup> In New China, "the construction is actively underway in multiple aspects, and the people of the whole country are excitedly using their own strength to build a happy new society. This is the time we should go back." The Chinese government attached great importance to this letter and, through various channels, introduced New China's policies on handling the matters of returned overseas students to students studying in the UK. This strengthened the determination of students studying in the UK to return to China and participate in the construction of New China. Some student organizations (the Chinese Students' Association in the UK, the Association for Science and Technology in the UK, etc.) also launched a movement to return home. Beginning in 1950, the Chinese Students' Association in the UK organized monthly seminars and lectures on topics mostly related to New China issues. During this period, although the British government officially recognized the People's Republic of China on January 6, 1950, it did not vigorously support students studying in the UK to return to China.

In order to win more returned overseas students, the Ministry of Education put forward the "Principles for the Return of Chinese Students Studying in Capitalist Countries" in March 1951. The main contents of these principles are as follows: 1. For those who study natural sciences and social sciences related to financial construction technology, if their studies have not come to an end, generally advise them to continue with study, try to guide their learning direction, encourage them to return to China as soon as possible after completing studies and participate in the construction of the motherland; 2. For those who have completed their studies, encourage them to return to the country as soon as possible. For those who have determined job after negotiation with various agencies, schools, and corporate departments, assist them in returning to China as soon as possible; 3. For those who study culture, education, politics, law, and financial theory, advise them to return to China as soon as possible; 4. For those who cannot continue their studies due to financial difficulty, advise them to return home.<sup>6</sup> After the

introduction of this policy, the number of returned students studying in the UK gradually increased. Huang Kun, a researcher at the University of Liverpool, Li Xun and Zhang Peilin who graduated from the University of Sheffield, Ke Jun who graduated from the University of Birmingham, Xia Peisu who graduated from the University of Edinburgh, and Tang Sheng who graduated from the University of Cambridge all returned to China in 1951. According to the book *History of Overseas Education in China: After 1949* edited by Li Tao, 71 students studying in the UK returned to China in 1951, accounting for 15.7% of the total number of students returning to China that year, an increase of nearly 6 percentage points over the previous year. After 1951, the number of overseas students returning to China gradually decreased. From 1949 to 1954, 193 students studying in the UK returned to China, accounting for 43.7% of the total number of Chinese students studying in the UK. The book *History of Overseas Education in China: After 1949* provides detailed statistics of the number of students studying in the UK who returned to China from 1949 to 1954 as follows Table 1.<sup>7</sup>

	1949.8—	1950.7—	1951.1—	1952.1—	1953.1—	1954.1—	Total
<b>Return time</b>	1950.6	1950.12	1951.12	1952.12	1953.12	1954.12	number of students studying in the UK who returned to China
<b>Number of returnees</b>	50	28	71	24	13	7	193
<b>Percentage % in the number of returned</b>	12.2%	9.9%	15.7%	18.8%	14.6%	11.1%	13.6%

overseas
students that
year

It can be seen from the above table that: 1. the number of students studying in the UK who returned to China was the highest in 1951, which was 71, and that in 1954 was the lowest, which was only 7; 2. Most students studying in the UK returned in the previous three years, totaling 149 and accounting for 77.2% of the total students studying in the UK who returned to China. By 1952, the number of students studying in the UK who returned to China gradually decreased. There are several reasons for this phenomenon: 1. At the beginning of liberation, the new Chinese government formulated active and effective policy for returned overseas students, and vigorously helped students studying in the UK return to their homeland; 2. The patriotic enthusiasm and attachment of students studying in the UK made them return to find employment; 3. Since the British government did not establish formal diplomatic relations with China at that time, this affected the mutually beneficial development of education between China and UK.

### **THE TRAJECTORY OF OVERSEAS EDUCATION IN THE UK AND ITS EVOLUTION (1949-1966)**

After the founding of New China, the socialist countries headed by the Soviet Union immediately recognized the new people's power state, and a few capitalist countries also recognized the new people's power state, including the UK. In June 1950, the Korean War broke out, resulting in the delay in establishing diplomatic relations between China and UK. At this time, the Chinese government adopted a "one-sided" approach in diplomacy, that is, leaning to the socialist camp headed by the Soviet Union. <sup>6</sup> Therefore, in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, New China did not carry out educational exchange activities with Western capitalist countries, let alone sending students to the UK.

On June 1, 1950, the then Minister of Education Ma Xulun pointed out at the first national education conference that "it is necessary to send intellectuals with considerable work experience and academic foundations to study abroad in a planned way, so as to effectively and thoroughly absorb experience of foreign countries, especially Soviet Union and Eastern European new democratic states, in country building". In June of this year, Premier Zhou Enlai organized a meeting and decided to send 35 overseas students to the five Eastern European People's Democratic States of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria. "Some of them will be selected from this year's college graduates (or, if necessary, undergraduates), and five will be selected from each department of heavy industry and fuel industry after examinations." <sup>4</sup> These 35 students were all sent in interchange mode. Among these students, 10 went to Czechoslovakia, with 5 studying Chinese and history, 5 studying military engineering; 10 went to Poland, with 5 studying Chinese and history, 5 studying coal mines; 5 students each went to Romania, Hungary, and Bulgaria, all of whom studied Chinese and history. At the same time, preparations for sending students to the Soviet Union were intensively carried out. Since New China had a close relationship with the Soviet Union, sending students to the Soviet Union became the main task of overseas education at that time. In July 1950, the Chinese Academy of Sciences formulated the "Outline of the Program for Sending Researchers to Study Abroad" and decided to send 10 researchers to the Soviet Union, all of whom majored in science and engineering. However, due to various reasons, the Chinese Academy of Sciences finally selected 7 people and sent them in 1951. <sup>8</sup> On July 6, 1951, the Ministry of Education issued a notice, requesting all regions to quickly select personnel to study in the Soviet Union and submit the list to the Ministry of Education before July 12. In September, these students were sent to study in the Soviet Union. In 1951, China sent a total of 375 students to the Soviet Union. <sup>6</sup> This was the first time that New China sent

overseas students to the Soviet Union. The adopted approach was as follows: all units recommended personnel to be uniformly sent by the Ministry of Education. Since the vast majority of the students studying in the Soviet Union did not understand Russian, they faced many difficulties during their study abroad. The country also established a Preparatory Department for Overseas Education in the Soviet Union to train Russian among preparatory students for study in the Soviet Union. In 1952, China sent 220 students to the Soviet Union. From 1954 to 1956, China sent more than 1,000 students to the Soviet Union each year, with 1,375, 1,932, and 2,085 students in each year, respectively.<sup>6</sup> These arrangements have been relatively successful, providing experiences for sending students to UK and other Western capitalist countries.

On April 25, 1957, Mao Zedong delivered a speech "On the Ten Major Relations" at the enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee.<sup>9</sup> He proposed not to blindly learn from the Soviet Union. "Our policy is to learn the strengths of all nations and countries". He also proposed, "we should learn the scientific aspects from advanced science and technology and business management methods in capitalist countries. Companies in industrialized countries employ fewer people, operate more efficiently, and excel in business. These should be learned in accordance with principles so that we can improve our work." Mao Zedong's speech on ten major relations not only pointed out the direction for the development of China's relations with capitalist countries, but also pointed out the direction for the development of China's overseas education in the UK.

With the end of the Korean War, Sino-British relations gradually improved. At the end of 1953, Zhou Enlai proposed the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, and Mao Zedong proposed to "extensively make friends" on the basis of the Five Principles. He encouraged Chinese diplomats to seize the current favorable opportunity to "go out" and actively carry out diplomatic work with capitalist countries such as the UK. Therefore, China took the initiative to

improve relations with UK. In June 1954, China and UK established diplomatic relations at the level of charge d'affaires. With the improvement of relations between the two countries, the issue of educational cooperation between the two countries was put on the agenda. In June 1956, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs submitted to the State Council the "Request for Instructions on Dispatching Graduate Students to Capitalist Countries", which was approved by the State Council. The main contents of the "Request" are as follows: 1. With the increasing cultural and educational exchanges between China and capitalist countries, it is necessary to send a certain number of postgraduate students to those countries for overseas study. 2. Due to the complex situation in capitalist countries, the dispatched students must be relatively strong politically and have certain experience in life. Therefore, except for special circumstances, generally only graduate students are dispatched, excluding college students. 3. For countries that have established diplomatic relations with China but have not received our overseas students, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Foreign Cultural Liaison Bureau formally proposed to negotiate with relevant countries or recommended mutual exchange of students, and discussed on specific measures. 4. For countries that have not established diplomatic relations with China but have mutually set up representative offices (such as commercial representative offices, etc.), the issue of exchanging overseas students can be raised as the case may be, the representative office abroad or the Chinese people's organizations for foreign affairs (such as the Foreign Cultural Association) may be responsible for the negotiation. 5. According to the requirements of the foreign affairs, culture, foreign trade, health and other departments and the Foreign Liaison Bureau on the dispatch of overseas students, 50 overseas students were planned to be dispatched to capitalist countries from 1956 to 1957, including 3 to the UK, 8 to India, 5 to Egypt, 3 to Syria, 3 to Indonesia, 3 to Myanmar, 3 to Afghanistan, 4 to Sweden, 3 to Finland, 3 to Pakistan and 12 others. 4 It can be seen from this "Request" that: 1. The Chinese government has started to send students to the UK, but only 3 students, so the number is very small. This is because China sent students to the UK for the first time, and there

was no experience to learn from; 2. India and Egypt received slightly larger numbers of overseas students. This is because China has sent overseas students to India and Egypt, so more students were sent on this basis; 3. All the students sent to the UK are visiting scholars. In addition to possessing certain experience and strong self-care ability, they could also learn more advanced knowledge, which was also in line with the selection policy at that time. The selection policy at that time was "to send more graduate students and generally exclude college students."<sup>8</sup>

For the first time, the new China sent its first batch of students to the UK. All three of them were visiting scholars specialized in languages. They arrived in the UK at the end of 1956 under the arrangement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which marked the official start of Chinese overseas education in the UK.

In 1958, the state raised the qualification requirements for overseas students and decided to select graduate students or teachers for further studies from various universities.<sup>4</sup> The Science Planning Committee of the State Council submitted to Zhou Enlai on April 9 the "1958 Report on Increasing the Number of Postgraduates Dispatched to Study Abroad", which decided to send students to the UK. Zhou Enlai approved the report. From 1959 to 1960, China sent students to the UK. In September 1960, the Second National Overseas Student Work Conference was held. In view of the current international political situation and the deteriorating Sino-Soviet relations, the meeting discussed the future dispatch policy.<sup>10</sup> At the end of the meeting, a decision was made: in the future, students will be dispatched according to the instructions of the central government, and dispatch to capital countries such as the UK is possible. The main policy is to "reduce the number and improve the quality." In February 1961, the Ministry of Education put forward the principles for dispatching overseas students based on staffing. The main contents are as follows: 1. The major in overseas education must meet the needs of the country; 2. Focus on dispatching some professionals in cutting-edge

science and technology and basic theoretical disciplines; 3. Maximally try to select from in-service teachers and cadres; 4. The proportion of teachers going abroad for further study should be greater than that of postgraduate students; 4. Dispatched university graduates should have more than two years of practical work experience. According to this principle, the Ministry of Education formulated the "1961 Overseas Student Selection Program" on April 15, 1961. On May 29, the Ministry of Education issued the "Supplementary Notice on the Selection of Postgraduates and Teachers for Further Study in 1961" to various institutions of higher learning. The "Notice" stipulates that "this year, we plan to send a small number of students to the UK, Switzerland, Sweden, etc. to learn expertise in science and technology".<sup>4</sup> The "Notice" also stipulates that it is possible to select excellent teachers from colleges and universities. These people must meet the requirements for selection of overseas students, who must also be politically strong, have a high professional level, and have the ability to listen, speak, write, and read professional books in English. After graduation and return to China, they would still work in colleges and universities. The main purpose of sending students to the UK this time is to train university teachers and improve the scientific research level of universities. The majors studied by these students in the UK include: radio electronics and radio technology, large-scale turbo-generator design, atomic energy, low-temperature physics, metal deformation, theoretical physics, nuclear physics, and computing technology. These majors were urgently needed for national construction at that time. This batch of students was selected for overseas education in the UK basically from in-service teachers or scientific researchers, so the quality was effectively guaranteed.

In August 1962, the Ministry of Education issued the "Notice on the Selection of Postgraduates and Teachers for Further Study in 1962". The "Notice" stipulates that "the proportions of graduate students and teachers for advanced study are roughly half and half. Among these overseas students, some are sent to capitalist countries, who will still work in their original units after graduation and return to China."<sup>4</sup> According to the arrangement of this notice, the Ministry of Education sent an overseas student to the

UK. "4 students were sent to other relevant countries (mainly capitalist countries). After negotiation with the relevant countries, the other party has so far accepted a total of 76 students, including 58 to the Soviet Union, 15 to other socialist countries, and 1 to the UK, Chile and the UAE each." 4On October 3, 1962, the Science and Technology Committee submitted a request to Zhou Enlai, demanding to send 90 students abroad in 1963, including 10 to Western capitalist countries. After seeing the request for instructions, Zhou Enlai agreed to the Ministry of Education's approach. On November 3 of the same year, the Science and Technology Committee issued the "Plan for Dispatching Overseas Students in 1963" to the Ministry of Education and the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The "Plan" decided to send 8 overseas students to the UK. In fact, China sent five overseas students to the UK in 1963. These five students included: teacher Chen Jia'er from Peking University, teacher Yang Shilin from Zhejiang University, Xu Zhenjia from the Institute of Semiconductors, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Xu Kongshi from the Institute of Computing Technology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, and Liu Shilian from Peking Union Medical College Hospital.<sup>11</sup> All these five overseas students studied natural sciences, who were all in-service personnel from universities and research institutions and met the dispatch requirements of the year. So far, Chinese overseas education in the UK has gradually opened up.

On March 10, 1964, the Ministry of Education issued the "Notice on the Selection of Overseas Students in 1964". The "Notice" stated that "...in addition to further send students to the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and other socialist countries, channels are also opened up to send students to UK, France, Sweden, Denmark and other capitalist countries." <sup>11</sup>During this period, the problem of serious shortage of foreign language cadres became increasingly prominent. On March 12, the Foreign Affairs Office of the State Council and the Ministry of Higher Education jointly issued the "Report on Emergency Measures to Address the Current

Serious Shortage of Foreign Language Cadres" to various relevant departments. The "Report" pointed out: "The current international situation is developing rapidly. The demand for translation cadres in foreign affairs has increased sharply, a new Great Leap Forward is taking shape in domestic socialist construction, and a considerable number of foreign language cadres are also needed in scientific research fields.... In order to fundamentally solve this contradiction, we are formulating a longer-term foreign language education planning." <sup>4</sup>The main emergency measure mentioned in the "Report" is to send a large number of language students abroad, and these students are divided into two categories, one is advanced students and the other is high school graduates. In accordance with the spirit of the "Notice" and "Examination Registration", on May 5, the Ministry of Higher Education issued a notice to the British Representative Office, requesting it to contact relevant British departments, and decided that "20-25 English advanced students and 20 (10 sent through the Royal Society) natural science students would be dispatched to British school this year for a period of 2-3 years at their own expense. The means of dispatch can be decided through official negotiation, private or other means. If the other party requests to send students to our country to learn Chinese, it can be accepted on a reciprocal basis." <sup>4</sup> After some hard work, the British Representative Office submitted the "Report to the Foreign Cultural Affairs Commission on Dispatching Students Abroad through Official Negotiations" to the China Foreign Cultural Committee on May 29. According to the "Report", the Secretary of the Royal Society, Laurie, said that in 1964, 10 advanced students were acceptable, and some could be accepted in 1965, but the number of students studying in the UK is best maintained at 25-30. <sup>4</sup>The "Report" also suggested that we should vigorously develop non-governmental forces and strive to send more students to the UK. On July 13, the British Representative Office reported to the China Foreign Culture Committee: McLehose, the Director of the Far East Department of the British Foreign Office, agreed with China's request to send more students to the UK and introduced a staff member of the British Council of Culture to Xiong Xianghui from British Representative Office. Through multiple parties' efforts, China sent a total of

48 overseas students to the UK in 1964, of which 21 were language students. At the same time, the relevant departments of the State Council actively began to formulate the "Outline of the Seven-Year Plan for Foreign Language Education", which was completed in October. In the "Outline", the country decided to send 30 English language advanced students in 1965 and 35 in 1966. These students were mainly sent to the UK. According to this plan, the Ministry of Higher Education selected students to UK from university teachers and in-service personnel from other units. However, in fact, the number of actually dispatched English language students differed from the planned number. In addition, China also wanted to send more overseas students to study natural sciences in the UK. In 1965, the State Council approved the "Request for Instructions on Sending Natural Science Students to Capitalist Countries in 1965" submitted by the Ministry of Education. The "Report" decided to send 50 natural science students to the capitalist countries such as the UK and France in 1965. "With regard to the UK, students will be sent by utilizing the relationship between the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Royal Society".<sup>6</sup>This shows that the number of people will increase and language training is needed. Generally speaking, there was no change in the overseas education policy in 1965, and it was decided to still send more students to the UK. The first batch of students studying in the UK in 1965 were English language advanced students. There were 25 of them, all of whom were introduced by McLehose, Director of the Far East Department of the British Foreign Office. This group of advanced students arrived in the UK in January 1965, who were first trained at Ealing College in the UK for six months and then entered university for further study. This shows that rational use of personal relationships can promote the development of overseas education in the UK. In 1965, China sent a total of 128 overseas students to the UK, of which 38 were English language students. These overseas students came from three channels. One part was selected from colleges and universities; the other part was selected from in-service cadres; and the

other part was selected from high school graduates.

All in all, from 1956 to 1965, the country sent a small number of overseas students to the UK (the total number did not exceed 230), and most of them were sent in 1964 and 1965.<sup>12</sup> Most of the students studying in the UK majored in natural science, while there were few advanced language students. The living expenses of students studying in the UK were provided by the embassy in the UK, and the embassy in the UK exercised the authority to manage students studying in the UK. During overseas students' study in the UK, some newspapers in the UK wanted to interview them. In view of the complexity of the international and domestic environment, the Chinese Embassy in the UK stipulated that students studying in the UK would not accept any media interviews. At that time, the embassy in the UK also had three regulations: first, one cannot take British money by doing part-time job; second, one cannot secure a degree in the UK; third, one cannot publish papers reflecting respective research results abroad. These students studying in the UK were all advanced students, who had a firm political stance, strong business capabilities, and sensed heavy responsibility in the face of the complex environment at the time. "I feel very nervous for fear of disappointing the high expectations of my country and people, especially in the complex environment of a capitalist country."<sup>13</sup> Hence, they redoubled their efforts in the UK. Chen Jia'er, who went to study in the UK in 1963, put forward the experimental criterion for diagnosing gap-crossing resonance for the first time, and developed a method to effectively suppress the increase in the amplitude of the gap-crossing resonance through controllable local first harmonic.<sup>14</sup> This research result was recognized by British peers.

#### **GROUP ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS STUDYING IN THE UK (1949-1966)**

As mentioned above, from the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China to the eve of the "Cultural Revolution", China sent more than 200 students to the UK. Due to the arrival of the "Cultural Revolution", overseas education in the UK was interrupted. These overseas students studied diligently abroad, worked tirelessly after returning to China, forged ahead, and achieved outstanding

results. The author makes a statistical analysis of some students studying in the UK.

In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the students studying in the UK were all sponsored by the

government. In 1966, the "Cultural Revolution" broke out and most of the students studying in the UK returned to China. The author conducts statistical analysis on them based on relevant data. As is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

**Analysis of the group of students studying in the UK in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China (1949-1966)**

Name	Position or Title	Major	Year of Birth	School of graduation	Education background before studying abroad	Learning duration	Unit	Receiving school in the UK
<b>Chen Huowang</b>	Academician of Chinese Academy of Engineering	Computer	1936	Fudan University	Undergraduate	1965—1967	National University of Defense Technology	National Institute of Physics, UK
<b>Gu Hongzhong</b>	Director, PhD supervisor	Turbine	1927	Dalian University of Technology	Undergraduate	1965—1967	Shanghai Jiao Tong University	University of Liverpool
<b>Gu Yunhui</b>	Professor	Physiology	1932	Wuhan University	Undergraduate	1965—1967	Peking University	University of Cambridge
<b>Guo Xiaozhong</b>	Professor	Environmental Engineering	1929	Taiwan University	Postgraduate	1962—1965	Hohai University	University of Cambridge

	Vice President of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies	English	1935	Sun Yat-sen University	Undergraduate	1964— 1966	Guangdong University of Foreign Studies	University of London
<b>Li Dao</b>								
	Department head	Physics	1932	Wuhan University	Undergraduate	1958— 1966	Wuhan University	University of London
<b>Liang Jiabao</b>								
	Vice President of Shanghai Jiao Tong University	Materials science	1930	Shanghai Jiao Tong University	Undergraduate	1965— 1967	Shanghai Jiao Tong University	London National Laborator y, UK
<b>Lin Dongliang</b>								
	Senior translator	English	1938	Nanjing University	Undergraduate	1964— 1966	Nanjing University	University of London
<b>Shen Ruoyun</b>								
	PhD supervisor	Semiconducto r	1929	Fudan University	Undergraduate	1963— 1966	Institute of Semiconductor s, Chinese Academy of Sciences	University of Oxford
<b>Xu Zhenjia</b>								
	PhD supervisor	Acoustics	1937	Nanjing University	Undergraduate	1965— 1967	Chinese Academy of Sciences	University of Birmingham
<b>Xiang Dawei</b>								
	President of University of International Business and Economics	English	1937	University of International Business and Economics	Undergraduate	1964— 1966	University of International Business and Economics	University of London
<b>Sun Weiyan</b>								

<b>Wu Jianping</b>	Academician of Chinese Academy of Sciences	Physiology	1934	Fudan University	Undergraduate	1964—1966	Shanghai Branch of Chinese Academy of Sciences	University of Oxford
	Department head	Shipbuilding	1926	Shanghai Jiao Tong University	Undergraduate	1963—1965	Shanghai Jiao Tong University	Marine Department, British National Laboratory
<b>Xu Min</b>	Director of State Key Laboratory	Shipbuilding	1928	Dalian University of Technology	Undergraduate	1965—1967	Shanghai Jiao Tong University	British Ship Research Association
	Vice President of Zhejiang University	Chemistry	1919	Zhejiang University	Undergraduate	1963—1965	Zhejiang University	University of Liverpool
<b>Yang Xinnan</b>	Head of the teaching and research section	English	1937	Beijing Foreign Studies University	Undergraduate	1964—1968	Beijing Foreign Studies University	University of London
	PhD supervisor	Materials science	1924	Yenching University	Postgraduate	1965—1966	Tsinghua University	University of Birmingham
<b>Xue Jingxuan</b>	Researcher	Physics	1930		Undergraduate	1965—1966	Institute of High Energy Physics, Chinese Academy of	British Physics Laboratory

							Sciences	
							University of	
<b>Zhao Chengcai</b>	Department head	English	1938	Heilongjiang University	Undergraduate	1965—1967	International Relations	University of London
	Academic Dean of Peking Union Medical College	Biochemistry	1926	Peking University	Postgraduate	1963—1964	Peking Union Medical College	National Institute for Medical Research
<b>Zhang Youshan</b>	Academician of Chinese Academy of Sciences	Biology	1925	Zhejiang University	Postgraduate	1964—1966	Shanghai Institute of Biochemistry, Chinese Academy of Sciences	Institute of Molecular Biology, Cambridge
	Dean of Graduate School of Shanghai Jiao Tong University	Shipbuilding	1929	Shanghai Jiao Tong University	Undergraduate	1964—1966	Shanghai Jiao Tong University	National Physical Laboratory
<b>Zhenban</b>	President of Peking University, Academician			Jilin		1963—	Peking University	

<b>Chen</b>	n of Chinese	Physics	1934	University	Postgraduate	1966	University	Oxford
<b>Jia'er</b>	Academy of							
	Sciences			Nanjing		1962—1964		University of
<b>Wang</b>	Professor	English	1938	University	Undergraduate		State Council	London
<b>Deren</b>								

Data Source.

Li Tao, Ed.: *History of Overseas Education in China: After 1949*, Higher Education Press, 2000 Edition; Western Returned Scholars Association Ed.: "List of Western Returned Scholars Association Members" (volume I, II), Science and Technology Literature Publishing House, 2003 Edition; Compiled by the British Embassy in China: "Address Book of Chinese Professionals in the UK" (Internal Information) and Internet Information.

As can be seen from the above table: (1) Among the 24 students studying in the UK, 2 were over 40 years old when they studied abroad. One was teacher Yang Shilin from Zhejiang University, and the other was teacher Yu Zhenzong from Tsinghua University. There were 12 people aged 30-40 years old when studying abroad, and 7 of them were under 35 years old (inclusive). There were 10 people aged 20-30 years old when studying abroad, and 1 of them was under 25 years old. From this set of data, it can be seen that most students studying in the UK were aged 30-40 years old, followed by those aged 20-30 years old. Nonetheless, two students studying in the UK were over 40 years old. After 1962, the state did not impose strict restrictions on the age of students studying abroad. It only stipulated that "one should have more than three years of professional-related practical work experience and possess certain scientific research capabilities".<sup>4</sup> Therefore, these two students in the UK who were over 40 years old met the selection conditions at the time. (2) 19 students studying in the UK had an undergraduate degree, accounting for 79.2% of the total, and 5 had a postgraduate degree or above, accounting for 20.8% of the total. They all graduated from famous universities in China. At that time, postgraduate education in China was just beginning, and study for a degree was not

popular. "Without a degree, the degree was the object of criticism at that time."<sup>14</sup> These students studying in the UK had work experiences, who were on-the-job training personnel and possessed strong business capabilities. The policy of overseas education after 1962 stipulated that "overseas students studying natural sciences and social sciences must have an undergraduate degree and have solid theoretical foundation and professional knowledge of the major"<sup>4</sup>, so college teachers and scientific researchers with undergraduate degree took up the majority then. (3) Among these students studying in the UK, 18 majored in science and engineering, accounting for 75.0% of the total, 6 majored in English, accounting for 25.0% of the total, and these 6 were all dispatched after 1964. At that time, the Chinese students sent to the UK mainly majored in science and engineering. After 1964, the country was in short supply of language talents, so it appropriately sent more English majors to the UK. (4) Among these students studying in the UK, only 1 was sent in the 1950s, while 23 people were dispatched in the 1960s. It was because in the 1950s, the country sent a very small number of people to Britain, and the number only increased after 1964. Most of the overseas students studied in the UK for two years, and a few studied for three years, but the country did not allow them to study for a degree in the UK. (5) 23 students studying in the UK were from famous domestic universities and scientific research institutions, and one was from the State Council.

Where, 10 people were from universities and research institutions in Beijing, 7 were from universities and research institutions in Shanghai, 2 were from universities in Jiangsu, and 1 was from universities in each of Zhejiang, Guangdong, Hubei, and Hunan. From this set of data, it can be seen that these students studying in the UK were mainly from universities and scientific research institutions in Beijing and Shanghai, because this region had developed cultural and educational undertakings with many universities and scientific research institutions, which belonged to the key areas of teaching and research valued by the state; (6) Among the 24 students studying in the UK, 4 were academicians, 12 served as middle-level and above cadres in their units, and all acquired the title of professor. (7) Among these students, 7 studied at the University of London, 3 studied in University of Oxford, 2 studied in each of University of Cambridge, University of Birmingham, and University of Liverpool, and 8 pursued advanced studies at famous research institutions in the UK. These universities and research institutions were all in England, and most of them were in London. This is because England is the most developed place in the UK, with convenient transportation, many universities and research institutions. Also, the Chinese Embassy in London is located in London, which helps management of students studying in the UK and also facilitates students' study and life.

This group of students studying in the UK worked hard after returning home and achieved a series of results. Chen Jia'er extended the theory and method of beam optics to the process of beam clustering, cutting and transport in the 1970s, and applied the results to the pulsed system on the superconducting linear accelerator, compressing 64MeV of sulfide ions to 100 picoseconds, which was at the international advanced level at that time.<sup>15</sup> After returning to China, Wu Jianping devoted himself to scientific research. For the first time, he proved that the fiber ends from neurons in the ventrolateral nucleus of the thalamus have a direct synaptic connection with neurons in the

fast pyramidal tract of the cerebral cortex; it was also proved that stimulation of the para-sulcus 4 and 6 cortex elicited a monosynaptic response on the fast-transmitting spinal network neurons in cats, etc.<sup>16</sup>

## CONCLUSION

On October 1, 1949, the People's Republic of China was founded. Since then, New China entered a period of economic recovery and social construction. During this period, the country actively attracted overseas students to return to China for social construction, including students studying in the UK. Since China and Britain had contradictions regarding Taiwan issue, and China adopted "one-sided" foreign policy, in the first few years of the founding of the People's Republic of China, China did not send students to Britain. With the improvement of Sino-British relations and the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations, China began sending students to the UK in 1956, but the scale was small and the number of students was small. During this period, the majors studied by students studying in the UK were mainly science and engineering. After the "Cultural Revolution" broke out, students studying in the UK were recalled to participate in the "revolution", and overseas education in the UK was interrupted. Generally speaking, contemporary Chinese overseas education in the UK mainly presents the following two characteristics.

(1) Overseas education in the UK was deeply influenced by the Sino-British relationship. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union first established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, and some democratic countries in Eastern Europe successively established diplomatic relations with China. The new Chinese government adopted "one-sided" diplomatic strategy, giving priority to overseas education activities in countries of socialist camp, and sending students to the Soviet Union and the democratic countries of Eastern Europe. The United States imposed a blockade on the New China. Although UK recognized the People's Republic of China in January 1950, it adopted the same attitude towards Taiwan and North Korea as the United States. Therefore, the new Chinese government did not establish formal diplomatic relations with the UK at the beginning of its establishment, nor did it engage in overseas

education in the UK. After the Korean War, the relationship between China and UK gradually improved. The two countries established diplomatic relations at the level of charge d'affaires in 1954, which laid the foundation for the start of overseas education in the UK. In 1956, China and the Soviet Union diverted on the issue of Stalin, and the relationship between the two countries gradually became ossified, so China began to consider carrying out educational exchange activities with Western capitalist countries, including the UK. Also in this year, Sino-British relations further improved, and China sent three students to the UK. In the last few years of the 1950s, China only sent a handful of students to Britain. It was in the 1960s when Sino-Soviet relations further deteriorated that China decided to increase its efforts to send more students to the UK. In October 1964, the country expanded the scale of overseas education, formulated the "Outline of the Seven-Year Plan for Foreign Language Education"<sup>8</sup> and decided to send several language students to the UK. However, due to the outbreak of the "Cultural Revolution", the plan became a dead letter. At the beginning of the "Cultural Revolution", Sino-British relations deteriorated and overseas education in the UK was suspended. In 1971, China restored its legal seat in the United Nations, and overseas education in the UK was restored.

(2) Overseas education in the UK continues to develop under the influence of the country's overseas education policy. Overseas education in a country is influenced by that country's policies. After the founding of New China, the overseas education policy was continuously adjusted and gradually improved. As mentioned above, in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, China adopted "one-sided" foreign policy, so the overseas education policy during this period showed obvious traces of "leaning to one side". The state gave priority to sending students to the socialist countries headed by the Soviet Union, and the number of students studying in the Soviet Union was the highest and the scale was the largest. After breaking through the national restrictions, China began to send

students to the UK. In 1957, the country adjusted the overseas education policy and raised the qualification requirement for studying abroad, that is, "send more graduate students, generally exclude undergraduates". In terms of disciplines, they should be "high, advanced, sophisticated disciplines in shortage". At this time, overseas education work in the UK just started, and the relevant departments proceeded with the overseas education work in the UK in accordance with this policy. Take 1961 as an example. The students sent to the UK this year were all university teachers, and all their majors belonged to "high, advanced, sophisticated disciplines in shortage", such as atomic energy, low-temperature physics, metal deformation, and nuclear physics. In 1964, the country adjusted its overseas education policy and decided to send more students to capitalist countries. Due to the serious shortage of foreign language translators at that time, the country decided to send more foreign language students. Under this policy, the number of people studying in the UK increased and the scale gradually extended. In 1966, the "Cultural Revolution" broke out, and the Ministry of Education issued the "Notice to Overseas Students on Returning to China to Participate in the Cultural Revolution Movement" in 1967. Therefore, students studying in the UK returned to China to participate in the "Cultural Revolution", and their education in the UK came to an abrupt end.

### Author Declaration

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